NOVA SCOTIA Government of Nova Scotia

Protecting Nova Scotia's Abandoned Cemeteries

Department of Education and Culture (to July 99)
November 2, 1998 18:31

The Protection of Abandoned Cemeteries bill introduced in the legislature today would protect heritage cemeteries in Nova Scotia against neglect, vandalism or property development.

The legislation concerns those cemeteries that are not the responsibility of any particular group or where the ownership of the cemetery is unclear.

Education and Culture Minister Robbie Harrison said the legislation is important to all Nova Scotians. "The Nova Scotia Museum has had over 300 letters, e-mails and phone calls from individuals and groups concerning abandoned cemeteries," said Mr. Harrison. "The legislation responds to a clear need to protect the final resting place of our ancestors, and to preserve an important part of our heritage."

The legislation establishes three things:
- Once a piece of property has been used for human burial it cannot be used for any other purpose.
- Groups interested in maintaining a grave site may do so through a permit system.
- It is a crime to damage or disturb a grave or gravestone without a permit that sets out appropriate procedures to work on the site.

The legislation will also make it possible for people to cross a piece of private uncultivated land to visit a cemetery.

Heritage groups and genealogical associations applaud the proposed legislation.

"The information contained on these grave stones is a vital part of the history of our province," said Dr. Alan Marble of the Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia.

"This information often cannot be found anywhere else. This legislation would protect this important connection to the past."

More and more Nova Scotians are interested in preserving their family's history and grave sites. This legislation recognizes this interest, and allows groups and individuals to take action to protect these historical sites.

NOTE: The following is intended for use by broadcast media.

The provincial government introduced a bill today to protect the province's heritage cemeteries.

The bill is designed to guard abandoned cemeteries against neglect, vandalism or property development.

Cemeteries that are not the responsibility of any particular group, or where the ownership of the cemetery is unclear will be affected by the bill.

-30-

Contact: Janet Bryson
Department of Education and Culture
902-424-2795
E-mail: brysonja@gov.ca

Text of Cemeteries Protection Act (Bill No. 58)

djh Nov. 02, 1998 6:31 p.m.

This page and all contents Crown copyright © 2006, Province of Nova Scotia, all rights reserved. Please send comments to Communications Nova Scotia: release@gov.ns.ca

Privacy